

The Natural Complex of Wrangel Island Reserve

According to the letter mentioned above, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation has examined an appeal on behalf of Greenpeace USA related to the planned exploitation of oil deposits on the territory of the buffer zone included in the World Heritage property The Natural Complex of Wrangel Island Reserve and informs you of the following.

Resolution No. 103-r adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation on January 31, 2013 introduced changes in Resolution No. 787-r adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation on June 15, 2009 and related to the approval of the list containing subsoil plots of federal significance provided for use without any auctions being held, as a result the list was amended to include additional subsoil plots of federal significance, such as: Yuzhno-Chukotsky and Severo-Wrangelevski-1.

Due to a clerical mistake, the abovementioned licensed plots provided by Rosneft Public Limited Oil Company (OAO) for geological surveys of subsoil resources, exploration and production of hydrocarbons to be performed based on a combined license have partially involved the waters of the protected area included in Wrangel Island Reserve that was established according to Decree No. 2559-r issued by the Government of the Russian Federation as of December 27, 2012.

According to the Regulation on the Protected Area of Wrangel Island State Nature Reserve approved by Decree No. 215 of the RF Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on July 01, 2015 (registered by the RF Ministry of Justice, No. 29783), drilling activities, exploration and extraction of minerals are prohibited within the boundaries of the protected area.

In connection therewith, to prevent violations of environmental laws, the Federal Agency for Subsoil Use has made adjustments to the boundaries of Severo-Wrangelevski-1 and Yuzhno-Chukotsky subsoil plots of federal significance located on the Chukchi Sea continental shelf in the fulfillment of Order No. 02-11-44/3824 issued by the RF Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on February 18, 2015 and according to Article 7.1 contained in Law No. 2395-1 "On Subsoil Resources" as of February 21, 1992. However, the current legislation does not contain any requirements related to introducing changes in the List containing subsoil plots of federal significance approved by Resolution No. 787-r adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation on June 15, 2009.

Therefore, at present, a positive solution has been found to the issue related to preventing exploitation of oil deposits located in the protected area of Wrangel Island State Nature Reserve, being the UNESCO World Heritage property, and this matter is currently irrelevant.